

B. C. TAP WATER ALLIANCE

Caring for, Monitoring, and Protecting
British Columbia's Community Water Supply Sources

Email – info@bctwa.org

Website – www.bctwa.org



December 1, 2014

Media Release

Alliance Releases *Scene of the Crime*, a New Report Analysis of the Mount Polley Mine's Tailings Storage Facility

Vancouver: 17 weeks after one of the world's largest (by volume) heavy metals tailings catastrophes struck, smothered and polluted Hazeltine Creek near the western arm of Quesnel Lake, the BC Tap Water Alliance's Coordinator and author, Will Koop, has released the first investigative report on Imperial Metals Corporation's tailings dam, which engineers often refer to as a Tailings Storage Facility (TSF). *The Scene of the Crime: A Preliminary Analysis and History of the Mount Polley Mine Tailings Storage Facility* (download links below), provides an assessment from government and company documents probing the history and inner workings of a terrible tragedy.

At the centre of this history was an understanding and a purpose conveyed to the public in 1990 that the tailings impoundment would be carefully constructed and safely maintained so as to last an eternity, "in perpetuity." The question is raised in the report's *Executive Summary*, that if such was its purpose then "why did the Mount Polley Mining Corporation, (MPMC), wholly-owned by Imperial Metals Corporation, fail so miserably in its promise to British Columbians to do so?"

The *Executive Summary* states the following about this critical question:

"The findings of this preliminary / interim report provide important clues and disturbing insights for this crucial question, and for other related questions, findings that reveal a long-held trail of company carelessness, stupidity and incompetence, as randomly catalogued from 2008 to 2010 by its former Engineer of Record in only three among many annual TSF inspection reports that have been published for public review from 1998 to 2013.

In association are implications that the provincial mining regulator may have failed to properly implement its "duty of care" to British Columbians in preventing this tragedy, those public lands and waters which have been entrusted through legislation to the regulator's legal service and administrative jurisdiction.

The findings in this preliminary report help stimulate an inevitable and sobering conclusion - that the Mount Polley mine tailings storage catastrophe could have been, and should have been, preventable. And, therefore the big questions: was this an environmental crime scene, and was there a previous and subsequent cover-up?"

-30-

- [Executive Summary download link, Scene of the Crime](#) (pdf file, 2.5 megabytes)
- [Full Report download link, Scene of the Crime](#) (pdf file, 62 megabytes)